

Buffer stock of foodgrains

†158. DR. D. MASTHAN:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a surplus buffer stock of foodgrains in Government godowns in the country;

(b) if so, the quantity of wheat and rice in Government's godowns during January, 2001;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Government are spending rupees 23 crores every day for maintenance of this surplus foodgrains; and

(d) if not, what is the exact expenditure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The stock of wheat and rice in Central pool as on 31/1/2001 as compared to buffer norms as on 1st January, is as under:

(Figures in Lakh tonnes)

Commodity	Stock position as on 31/1/2001	Buffer norms as on 1st January	Surplus
Wheat	241.18	84.00	157.18
Rice	223.97	84.00	139.97
Total	465.15	168.00	297.15

(c) and (d) The quantum of surplus varies with reference to the

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level of procurement and offtake of foodgrains. The per day carrying cost of surplus with reference to stocks as on 31st January, 2001 is Rs. 18 crores. The average per day cost of carrying surplus stock would be known after the close of the year and the accounts are finalized as the quantities vary on a daily basis.

New Foodgrains Policy

159. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a New Foodgrains Policy;

(b) if so, whether any step has been taken to store growing surplus as well as provide food to the poorest sections of the society;

(c) if so, whether Government have also favoured exemption of levy or any tax on the movement of foodgrains to check future increase in prices;

(d) if so, whether any concrete measure have been worked out in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. A High Level Committee to formulate a Long Term Grain Policy for the country has recently been constituted. The Terms of Reference of the said Committee include matters relating to Minimum Support Prices and price support operations, functioning of Public Distribution System, Policy regarding buffer stocks, Open Market Intervention and Export/Import, allocation of foodgrains for rural development programmes and other welfare programmes and FCI related issues, which also include the scope for reduction in the economic cost of foodgrains.